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Christmas Eve.—A Class Exercise.

First Speaker.—

The night is drear, the sighing winds
Like frightened children grieve;
But what care we for storm or cold,
To-night is Christmas eve.

With laughter glad and carols sweet
We hail the merry time,
While far and wide the swinging bell
In silver chorus chime.

No thought we give to gloom or care;
Let all the world be gay,
This merry eve, that ushers in
The merry Christmas day.

Teacher.—

Alas, in many a home to-night
The little children grieve;
In homes where never joy or mirth
Comes with the Christmas eve.

Yet he who came from his high home
A little child, to earth,
Meant every little child to share
The blessing of his birth.

Read now the tender story o'er,
And drink its meaning in,
For year by year the blessed word
A sweeter meaning win.

Second Scholar reads Matthew ii. 1–11.

Third Scholar reads Luke ii. 8–18.

Teacher.—

So should we haste, this Christmas eve,
Like those wise men of old,
To cast our treasures at the feet
Of him the star foretold.

Like them, too, we should seek to spread
The tidings of his love—
The wondrous love that made him leave
His shining home above.

Not for his own delight he came,
Nor any selfish gain,
But all to live this human life
And bear its grief and pain.

That every weary, suffering heart
Might find in him its rest—
For still the sorrows of the world
He beareth in his breast.

This is the meaning of the song
Sung first on Christmas day;
The lone heart cheered, the wanderer saved,
The sad tear wiped away.

And they who on this Christmas eve
Would prove these tidings true,
Will seek with eager heart and hand
Some loving deed to do.

A CHRISTMAS HYMN.

All sing.—

O merry bells of Christmas
Ring out your silver chimes,
The Christmas story telling
Throughout all lands and climes,
The glad song of the angels
Repeating o'er again,
Of "glory in the highest,
Peace and good will to men."

O Christmas time of gladness,
Amid thy sacred mirth
May envy, hate and malice
Be banished from the earth.
For ne'er shall Christmas carol
In perfect measure sound,
Till truth and love and mercy
In every heart abound.

O Christmas Star, the golden,
Forever may thy light,
The reflex of Christ's glory,
Illume the world's dark night.
O golden star of ages,
Shed wide thy steadfast ray
And herald to all nations
The glad millennial day.

Miss M. B. Sleight.

To the Old Year.

"Farewell, Old Year! a last, a long farewell!
Who shall live out the next, no tongue can tell;
For, wrapped in darkness, to but One alone
Is the dim pathway in the future known.
Then, whilst we live, may each with constant care
For higher, nobler, better life prepare;
So that, when Time's perplexities are o'er,
Our souls may dwell with God forevermore!"

For the Myrtle.

Keeping the Dog from Church.

SO it came to pass that meeting was to be held in a fine old church in a country place where for a long time the people had not been together for worship.

They were very glad to have meeting, for like all people they had wants that could not be satisfied in any other way.

All the week before this Sunday of which I am writing, the people had been saying to one another whenever they had met,

"We are to have meeting once more," and very greatly had they been rejoicing that this was to be so.

I might, if I would take time to do so, tell you how the women hurried to get their new dresses and bonnets done, and to get the clothing for their children all ready before the Saturday night came.

I don't know that they were very proud, at least not prouder than other people are, or more particular about what they wore to meeting; but the reason that they had so much to do, was because they had not had a meeting for so very long a time, that even their clothes had got demoralized for want of an opportunity to worship.

You may laugh at this, and think that I am making fun when I speak of people's clothes as getting demoralized for want of a meeting to go to. But this is a fact.

We usually think of worship as of something that belongs to the souls of men and women, and not to their bodies. And so it does. But then, there is an interesting fact about it.

The man grows from inner to outer, and in proportion as he gets decent, and keeps decent inside, will he be likely to keep decent outside. So that in any community where they have a place of worship, and keep it open, and "forsake not the assembling of themselves together" from Sunday to Sunday, they are very likely to keep themselves tidy, their clothing in good order, and all in readiness to meet their friends and neighbors when the day for worship comes.

You will think, dear little children who have begun to read this story, that I have forgotten what I began to write about.

But I have not forgotten. And now that I have told you a little something of the people to whom the dog "Prince" belonged, I will try and tell you something about him.

He belonged to Mr. Wing, or I should rather say that he belonged to Mr. Wing's son Allen, for Mr. Wing had bought him to please Allen.

Allen was very fond of a dog, and had all his life been asking his father, from time to time, to buy him one. But Mr. Wing had never consented until his elder sons, John and James, left home and went away to a distant city for work.

Then Allen was left alone, that is, he was the only child left in the great farmhouse, and of course he was very lonely.

So Mr. Wing had said to Allen's mother,

"Wife, I think I must let Allen have the dog now that he has been wishing for so long."

But Mrs. Wing replied,

"I would think twice before I bought a dog. They are a good deal of trouble and expense as well. It costs nearly as much to keep a dog as to keep a child."

"Oh, no," said Mr. Wing. "You must certainly be mistaken about that, because a boy has to have bought for him two suits of clothes every year, besides boots and shoes and hats; while a dog grows his own flannel, and leather, and felt, and broadcloth."

"Yes, I know," said Mrs. Wing. "A dog doesn't have to be clothed, but I think he would eat as much as a boy."

"Perhaps he would," Mr. Wing replied, "but I think we must try and afford to keep him, for since the boys went away Allen is very lonely, and I would be willing to spend some money to make him happy and comfortable."

After this conversation, the dog was bought, and Allen enjoyed the summer a great deal more than he would have done without him.

He was a very large, black, shaggy dog, and they named him "Prince," because he was such a splendid princely fellow.

Allen taught him to hunt, and run errands, and bring up cows, and tend sheep, and do a great many useful things about the farm.

All these things the dog seemed to enjoy doing

as much as his master enjoyed seeing him do them.

Prince was a very good dog to obey. He rarely went contrary to his master's commands except in the matter of following the horses and wagon, or carriages when they were driven away.

This was a temptation too strong for the poor dog to resist. He did so love to follow the horses that whenever he heard the sound of wheels, and knew that his master was in the carriage, it was too much, even for his spirit of obedience.

Allen allowed Prince to go usually, when the horses went away, and the dog had learned the way to mill and to market so that he could go as well as his master.

When the horses turned a certain corner, that was not far from the house, Prince knew that they were taking their master to mill.

If they turned the other corner, he knew that they were going to the market town where Mr. Wing did his buying and selling.

Once that corner was reached, the dog ran on and on, always keeping in advance of the horses and seldom looking behind him till mill or market place were reached.

This Sunday morning of which I write, Mr. Wing said to Allen,

"You must put the dog in the barn, and fasten the door before we start away this morning."

"Why must he be shut up, father?"

"Because he may make us trouble if he goes with us to church."

"I should like to have him learn to go to meeting," Allen replied, "but I don't know that to-day is the best day to begin the lesson."

"Why do you wish to teach him to go to church?"

"Because, if it is good for boys, I don't see why it wouldn't be good for dogs."

Mr. Wing smiled, as he replied,

"Don't you think yourself any better able to understand worship than this dog?"

"Yes, a little better able to understand, and yet I think he would understand enough to make it good for him to be there."

"Well, we will not begin his religious education to-day, so you be sure that the door of the barn is thoroughly fastened."

Allen obeyed his father, and Prince was shut up in the barn; a process which he rebelled against when it was going on, but got reconciled to after a few moments, till he heard the horses start away with the carriage to carry the family to church.

Then he set up a pitiful howling, which increased as they drove on.

They could hear poor Prince until they were a long way from the barn. But Allen thought he would soon get ovet his uneasiness when they were fairly out of his hearing.

He thought of him several times again before they reached the church, but after they were once there and he had the excitement of seeing so many people, he forgot poor Prince and his imprisonment.

But the dog was not forgetful of him all this time, and, to their amazement, when the service was just begun, the dog walked in at the door of the church, which was opposite where Mr. Wing's family sat, and coming straight down the aisle to where they were sitting, gave his master a very knowing look, and lay nown at his feet.

He had been running until he was very tired when he reached the church, and going into a sound sleep as soon as he had found his friends, he did not disturb the worship at all, except once to give a little yelp when the minister preached very loud, as if he were saying, "Pray don't disturb my nap with your noise."

Mrs. E. M. Bruce.

A Child's Hymn.

Now the day of work is done,
Now the quiet night's begun,
And I lay my tired head
Safe within my little bed,
Saviour, hear me;
Be thou near me,
Till the hours of dark have fled.

I can see from where I lie,
Glit'tring in the dark blue sky,
Here and there a little star
Shining out so clear and high.
Saviour, hear me;
Be thou near me,
Keep me safe beneath thine eye.

If I've grieved thee through this day
Let my sin be washed away;
Make me meek and pure and kind,
Give me thy most holy mind.
Saviour, hear me;
Be thou near me,
Let me now thy mercy find.

Thou art loving me above,
And I love thee for thy love;
Thou didst leave thy throne on high,
And for me come down to die.
Thou wilt hear me,
And be near me—
I am safe while thou art nigh.

For the Myrtle.

"Good-by, Mother."

ONLY a boy with a bundle,
Hurrying through the snow,
Hasting away on errands
Fast as his feet can go.

Slave of some hard employer,
Little has he of ease,
With always a world of errands
And everybody to please.

Out in the roughest weather
And poorly clad for the cold,
What has the lad, I wonder,
To keep him so bright and bold?

Only a boy with a bundle,—
But I see with a throb of joy
There are mother's eyes at the doorway
That follow with love the boy.

With lifted cap, as he sees her,
He turns her smile to greet;
Then shouts his "good-by, mother,"
As he hurries down the street.

Ah, my little lad, my pity
Is changed to a song of praise;
For they who honor their mother
Shall be prospered all their days.

H. A. B.

Sowing Little Seeds.

LITTLE BESSIE had got a present of a new book, and she eagerly opened it to look at the first picture. It was the picture of a girl standing by the side of a stream and throwing seeds into the water.

"I wonder what this picture is about," said she; "why does the girl throw the seeds into the water?"

"O, I know," said her brother Edward, who had been looking at the book, "she is sowing the seeds of water-lilies."

"But how small the seeds look!" said Bessie. "It seems strange that such large plants should grow out of such little things."

"You are sowing such tiny seeds every day, Bessie, and they will come up large, strong plants, after a while," said her father.

"Oh, no, father, I have not planted any seeds for a long while."

"I have seen my daughter sow a number of seeds to-day."

Bessie looked puzzled, and her father smiled and said:

"Yes, I have watched you planting flowers, seeds, and weeds to-day."

"Now, papa, you are joking, for I would not plant weeds."

"I will tell you what I mean. When you laid aside that interesting book and attended to what your mother wished done, you were sowing seeds of kindness and love. When you broke the dish that you knew your mother valued, and came instantly and told her, you were sowing the seeds of truth. When you took the cup of cold water to the poor woman at the gate, you were sowing the seeds of mercy. These are all beautiful flowers, Bessie. But I hope my little girl has been planting the great tree of love to God, and that she will tend and watch it until its branches reach the skies and meet before his throne."

I WILL tell you how a little child can be useful.

He can pick up a pin from the floor.

He can play with his little sister.

He can tell mamma when the baby cries.

He can reach the stool that she may put her foot on it.

He can hold the cotton when she winds it.

And he can make his mother happy by being a good boy.

For the Myrtle.

Does it Tick?

BENNY's uncle was a school-master, and one New Year's day his scholars gave him a fine gold watch. Then the question was, what should be done with the old one he had carried so long.

"I'm going to have it," said Benny. "I'm going to make him give it to me."

But Benny's mother told him he was too small to think of such a thing, and that his toy watch did just as well for him until he grew larger.

So Benny said nothing about the watch, but I am afraid somebody else told uncle John what Benny said. This might have been Benny's grandmother. I am not sure, only grandmothers are apt to do such things.

Benny did ask uncle John what had become of the watch, and uncle John answered him rather sharply that little boys musn't ask questions. So Benny retired, quite hurt at this remark, and gave up thinking about the watch.

In the course of a few weeks, his birthday came. When he woke in the morning and was fixing his pillow, in the dark, he felt something hard under it. What was it? It felt like — a watch! Was it his toy watch? no, it was larger, and had a long cord on it instead of a chain. He handled it over in his hands in the dark. Could it be? A bright thought struck Benny. *Did it tick?*

That would tell.

He held it to his ear. Yes, it ticked! Loud, and slow, and regular, just as he had heard uncle John's a hundred times. He knew the watch then, even in the dark.

Benny's mother had to make watch pockets in all his jackets, for Benny would wear his new watch all the time. She thought uncle John was foolish, but he said it would teach Johnny to be punctual, and make good use of his time.

Benny soon learned to tell the time of day and a hundred times a day when the present was new, he would take it out of his pocket and hold it to his ear for the music of hearing it tick.

Uncle John said they ought not to have to *watch* Benny so much, now he had a watch of his own. *H. A. B.*

"Sorry is not Enough."

"ALLAN! Where is Allan?"

A moment ago he was playing with his little cart in the yard, hauling dirt to the currant bushes. I cannot tell how many cartfuls he carried. He was busy as a little man. But Allan has gone. There is his cart.

"Allan, Allan!"

"I'se here!" at last said a small voice from the back-parlor.

"What are you there for?" asked his mother, opening the door, and looking in.

Allan did not answer at first. He was standing in the corner, with a pretty sober look on.

"Come out to your little cart," said his mother; "it is waiting for another run."

"I'se not been here long 'nuff," said the little boy.

"What are you here for at all?" asked his mother.

"I punishing my own self. I picked some green currants, and they went into my mouth," said Allan.

"Oh! when mother told you not to? Green currants will make my little boy sick," said his mother in a sorry tone.

"You needn't punish me," said Allan; "I punish me my own self."

His mother often put him in the back parlor alone when he had been a naughty boy, and you see he took the same way with himself.

"Are you not sorry for disobeying mother?" she asked Allan.

"I sorry; but sorry is not 'nuff. I punish me. I stay here a good while, and have thinks."

Is not Allan right? Sorry, if it is only sorry, is not enough.

Polly Pansy.

PRETTY Polly Pansy
Hasn't any hair, —
Just a ruff of gold down
Fit for ducks to wear;
Merry, twinkling blue eyes,
Noselet underneath,
And a pair of plump lips
Innocent of teeth!

Either side each soft cheek
A jolly little ear,
Painted like a conch-shell;
Isn't she a dear!
Twice five fingers,
Ten tiny toes;
Polly's always counting,
So of course she knows!

If you take a tea cup,
Polly wants a drink;
If you write a letter,
What *delicious* ink!
Helps you read your paper,
News of half the town,
Holds it just as you do,
But ah! it's upside down!

Polly when she's sleepy,
Means to rub her eyes,
Thumps her nose so blindly,
Ten to one she cries!
Niddle noddle numpkin,
Pretty lids shut fast,
Ring the bells, and fire the guns,
Polly's off at last.

Pop her in the cradle,
Draw the curtains round,
Fists are good for sucking, —
Don't we know the sound?
Oh, my Polly Pansy,
Can it, can it be,
That we ugly old folks
Once resembled thee?

KIND WORDS. Kind words are among the brightest flowers of earth. They help to convert the humblest home into a paradise; therefore use them, especially around the fireside circle. Children, try the power of kind and loving words, not only when visiting among your friends, but when at home.

Our Sunday Schools.

PENNSYLVANIA.

—The Sunday School at Titusville has met with a sad loss in the death, by accident on the cars, of its beloved Superintendent, Br. J. A. Hooper. The pastor, Rev. J. M. Bailey, writes of him:—"Br. Hooper was my right hand man in our Church—a Deacon, and a noble Christian Universalist. He was Superintendent of our Sunday School, leader of our Choir, and the most active, zealously interested, and efficient one of our little flock. We so leaned and depended upon him for church support and strength, that now he is gone, we are almost paralyzed with grief and anxiety." A great loss to the school, church and community is such a man, but he leaves a grand legacy behind him, a good name and a bright example, which will still carry on the work his hands have dropped.

"The memory of the just
Smells sweet, and blossoms in the dust."

ILLINOIS.

—One of the best and most hopeful things about our many vacant parishes is that so many of them keep up the Sunday School, while the pulpit is vacant, and by their zeal often keep it growing all the time. This is true of the School at Macomb, where Br. J. H. Baker is Superintendent, with a good corps of teachers. It is to be hoped a shepherd of this faithful flock will soon be found to fill the good place made vacant by the removal of Br. T. H. Tabor.

In General.

———Lord Hatherly, who has just retired from the active duties of Lord Chancellor of Great Britain, has been thirty-five years in connection with one Sunday School.

———A young lady teacher in a Sabbath School, some years ago, resolved at the beginning of the year not to go to school a single Sabbath that year, without taking with her, if possible, at least one new scholar. She attended fifty-one Sabbaths, and brought into the school fifty-one new scholars, who had never attended a Sabbsth School before.

———After the death of Bev. T. B. Penfield of the Madura Mission of the American Board, a scrap of paper was found in his pocket-book, showing that when he was twelve years of age he resolved to be a Christian missionary. How many lads of that age have we in our homes and Sunday Schools, who are resolving to become ministers in our churches?

Bringing them In.

Rev. Asa Bullard, a veteran Sunday School worker among the Congregationalists, writes in the *Independent*, —

"On addressing a school in one of our New England manufacturing cities, a few years ago, I suggested the following plan to increase their number. Let the superintendent appoint a class of boys and a class of girls to visit as many as they can during the week and urge them to attend. Next Sabbath let them report how many visits they have made, how many persons have promised to attend, and how many of them are then present. Then let two more classes be appointed in the same way, and keep up this measure through the season.

This plan was adopted, only a class of young men and a class of young women were appointed, as the school embraced a large number of operatives belonging to the mills. The next Sabbath the young men reported that fourteen persons had promised to attend, and half of them were present. The young ladies reported that thirty-five had promised to attend, and fifteen of them were present. The next spring the superintendent wrote: 'At the time of your visit our Sabbath School numbered one hundred and sixty scholars We adopted the plan you proposed and have followed it ever since, and I now have the pleasure of reporting to you a school of five hundred and fifty-seven members.'"

What God is to his People.

The Bible is full of the most striking comparisons, setting forth what God is to his people. He is their Sun, their Shield, their Shade, their Shepherd, their Shelter, their Salvation and their Song; their High Tower, their Help, their Hope, their Habitation, their Hiding-place, and the Horn of their salvation. He is their Fortress, their Fountain, and their Father; their Guide and their Glory. He is their Praise, their Portion, their Physician, their Prince and King. He is to them a Pillar of fire by night. He is their Keeper, their Buckler, their Beloved and their Bread. He is the Rock of their defence, their Deliverer and their Dwelling-place. He is a strength to the needy, a Refuge from the storm, a Shadow from the heat. Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help—whose hope is in the Lord his God!

Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might be unto our God forever and ever!

The Face of God.

Much of the language of the Bible is figurative, and the meaning of the language is to be sought under the figure. This language is often applied to God. For instance, we read of the "face of God," or "the face of the Lord." This signifies his favor. In Daniel ix. 17, we read "Cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary." Also, read Psalms xxxi. 16. In reference to God the language is used figuratively signifying his presence, countenance, or favor; as the "eyes of the Lord" signify his knowledge and presence. "His eye is in every place beholding the evil and the good. "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." I Pet. iii. 12. Our young readers will take note of this explanation.

Sowing Time.

Every day is a sowing time with us. We are sowing in our own souls and in other souls some kind of seed that will bear good or evil fruit. Which shall it be? Let us take heed. The seeds of evil sown in youth will increase and bear fruit in after life which will bring sorrow and affliction to the sower. "Say ye to the wicked it shall be ill with him, for the rewards of his hands shall be given him." This is what Eternal Wisdom says. "He that soweth to the flesh," or he that seeks only the pleasures of animal life, "shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting." Life everlasting is God's life of truth and holiness and love. Let us be careful each day what we sow.

Life of the Saviour.

LESSON CXVI.

TRIAL OF CHRIST BY THE SANHEDRIM.

"They have hated me without a cause."

SCRIPTURE. — Matt. xxvi. 59–68. Mark xiv. 55–65. Luke xxii. 63–71. John xviii. 19–24.

Question. — When did the Council meet to try Jesus?

Answer. — Luke xxii. 66.

NOTE. This council was called the Sanhedrim, and was the highest court of the Jewish nation. Of its origin, we can obtain no definite information. It consisted of seventy of the most noted men of the nation.

Q. — What did the council seek to do?

A. — Matt. xxvi. 59.

Q. — What success did they have in this attempt?

A. — Mark xiv. 56.

Q. — Who, at last, came forward to testify against Jesus?

A. — Matt. xxvi. 60.

Q. — What was their testimony?

A. — Matt. xxvi. 61.

Q. — Did their testimony agree?

A. — Mark xiv. 59.

Q. — When the high priest asked Jesus why he made no answer to these witnesses, what did Jesus say?

A. — Mark xiv. 61.

Q. — What question did the high priest now ask Jesus?

A. — Mark xiv. 61.

Q. — What was Christ's reply?

A. — Mark xiv. 62.

NOTE. They were expecting and desiring that the Christ should be the king of the Jews, but Jesus shows them that he was to have a higher throne and a broader kingdom.

A. — What did the high priest say Jesus had spoken?

A. — Merk xiv. 64.

Q. — What did the whole council decide?

A. — Mark xiv. 64.

Q. — What did the men who had Jesus in charge, do to him?

A. — Luke xxii. 63.

Q. — In what wicked way did they attempt to show that he was not a prophet?

A. — Luke xxii. 64.

Q. — What did they then do to Jesus?

A. — Mark xv. 1.

Hidden Seed

Enigma.

My first, the mother of a son,
Who did as she had taught him;
My second made a calf, because
The "people so besought him."

My third, a man when sorely tried,
Denied his Lord directly;
My fourth, a mighty preacher taught
The scriptures more correctly.

My fifth, a sign of servitude;
My sixth heard Jesus' teaching;
My seventh, Philip taught the way;
My eighth, where John was preaching.

My ninth, the precious time of life,
To pray and shout hosannah;
My tenth, the city where once stood
The temple of Diana.

My eleventh a city of old Greece;
My twelfth is next to "Sigma;"
My whole I wish each little one,
Who solves this long enigma.

Answer.

DEC. 21. Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted.

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